

WHO information session on health in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

CoP- 18 Doha

Public Health and Environment Department

Why is WHO working on climate change ?

Evidence of health risk

Each year:

- Undernutrition kills 3.5 million
- Poor water & sanitation kills > 2 million
- Indoor air pollution kills > 2 million
- Malaria kills 900,000
- Extreme weather events kill 60,000

WHO estimates that the climate change that has occurred since the 1970s already kills over 140,000 per year.



Evidence of health opportunity

- "Health benefits from reduced air pollution as a result of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions... may offset a substantial fraction of mitigation costs" – IPCC, 2007.
- E.g. Improved stoves and cleaner energy could reduce the 2 million annual deaths from indoor air pollution, and reduce warming effect.
- E.g. Sustainable urban transport – could cut heart disease by 10-25% in developed and developing countries.

.....among many others.....



Programmatic demand

- Over 95% of LDCs identify health as a priority sector for climate adaptation.
- Less than 30% have adequate health vulnerability assessments and health adaptation plans.

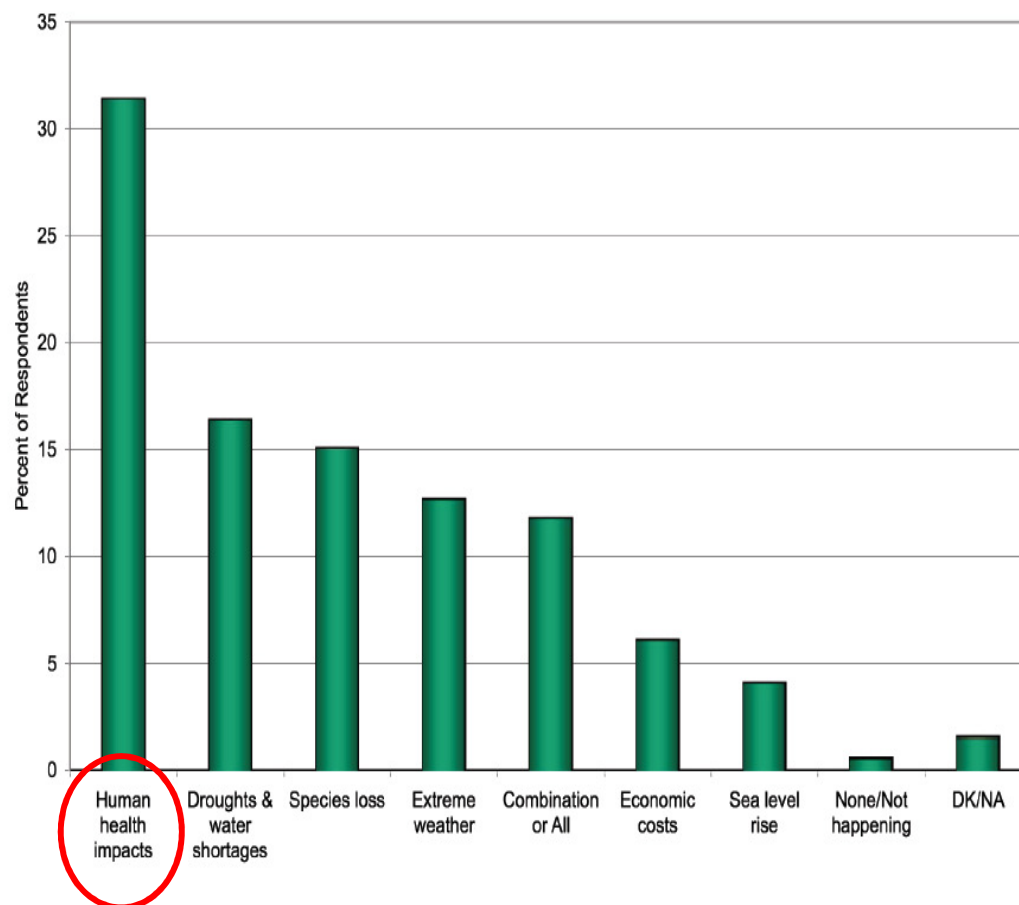


Public demand

Globescan poll in 30 countries

(UNDP 2007):

“Now I would like to ask you some questions about climate change, which is sometimes referred to as global warming or the greenhouse effect. Which ONE of the following possible impacts most concerns you personally, if any?”



Shared International Responsibility



Cumulative
emissions of
greenhouse
gases, to 2002



WHO estimates
of *per capita*
mortality from
climate change,
2000

Map projections from
Patz et al, 2007; WHO, 2009.

What is the status of health within the UNFCCC ?

Health as a central principle of the 1992 Rio conference and the UNFCCC:

1992 RIO DECLARATION Principle 1: *"Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a **healthy** and productive life in harmony with nature."*

UNFCCC Article 1: *"Adverse effects of climate change" : changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on **human health and welfare**.*

UNFCCC commitment to consider health effects of mitigation and adaptation measures:

UNFCCC Article 4.1 (f): *All Parties...shall: ...f. Take climate change considerations into account, to the extent feasible, in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ appropriate methods, for example impact assessments, formulated and determined nationally, with a view to minimizing adverse effects on the economy, on **public health** and on the quality of the environment, of projects and measures undertaken by them to mitigate or adapt to climate change;*

UNFCCC coverage of health in 2009

- 1) How many times was health mentioned in the 200 page draft agreement proposed in Copenhagen?
- 2) How many of the 323 side events focussed on health?
- 3) What percentage of global climate funds were allocated to health projects?
- 4) Of the 13 main economic models to inform climate mitigation decisions, how many incorporate health co-benefits?

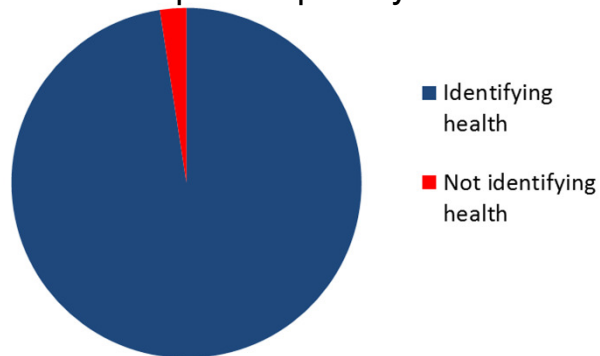
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UNFCCC coverage of health now: the positive

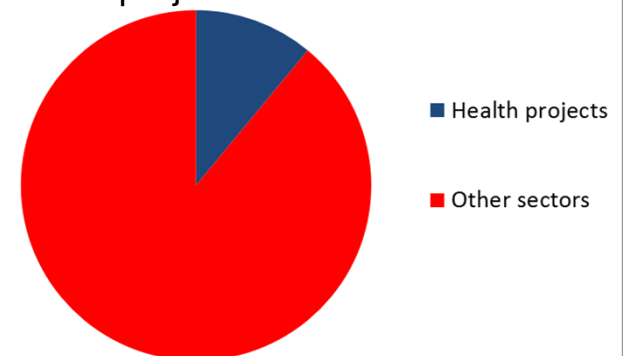
- Survey of CoP16 delegates rates importance of health at 8.2/10
- 12 side events covering health
- Health as one of 5-6 key sectors covered in adaptation technical programmes
- Health highlighted in national submissions on overall vision, motivating ambition, adaptation, impacts of response measures to CoP-18

UNFCCC coverage of health: less positive

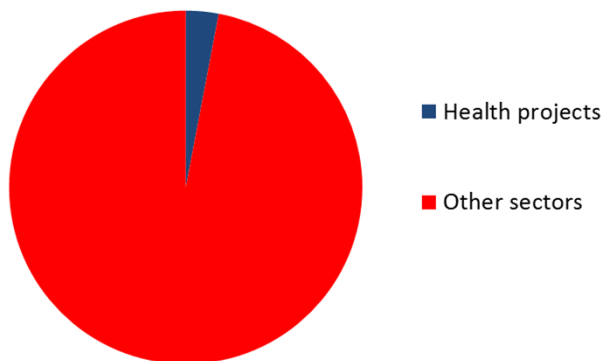
LDCs identifying health as adaptation priority



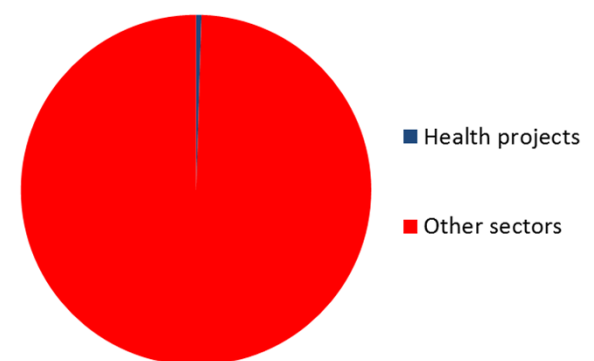
Number of adaptation projects submitted



Funds requested for health



Funds awarded for health





WHO's key messages for the UNFCCC

Message 1:

Health impacts are among the most significant damages from climate change – and health can be a driving force for public engagement in climate solutions.

- MS may wish to highlight health: including in relation to Durban platform for Enhanced Action.



Message 2:

Health is an essential pillar of sustainable development, and of the response to climate change. Integrated and intersectoral approach can improve policy coherence and efficiency.

-MS may wish to support health integration within Rio+20 and climate change processes.

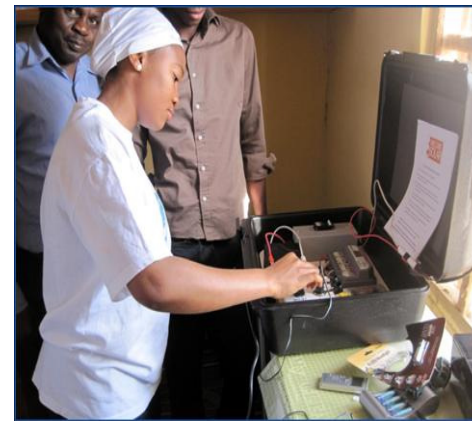


United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

Message 3:

Well-designed policies to increase resilience, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, can also greatly enhance health, health equity and gender equality.

- MS may wish to reinforce links between health resilience, gender equity, and health cobenefits; e.g. in negotiations on response measures.



Message 4:

Health progress should be tracked and monitored, including effects from other health-determining sectors, such as water resources and energy.

- MS may wish to support health indicators within the definition of Sustainable Development Goals.



Message 5:

Health impacts and co-benefits should be valued in selecting and financing climate change adaptation and mitigation policies.



Climate
finance

*- MS may wish to support health windows/
representation in climate finance mechanisms.*

The role of WHO

Climate change in WHO governance and reform

- Follows WHA resolution 61.19, and Executive Board workplan (2008-2013).
- Climate change (and environment and sustainable development) within new Category 3, and cross-cutting with others.
- National health adaptation plans as a progress indicator.

Advocacy & Partnerships

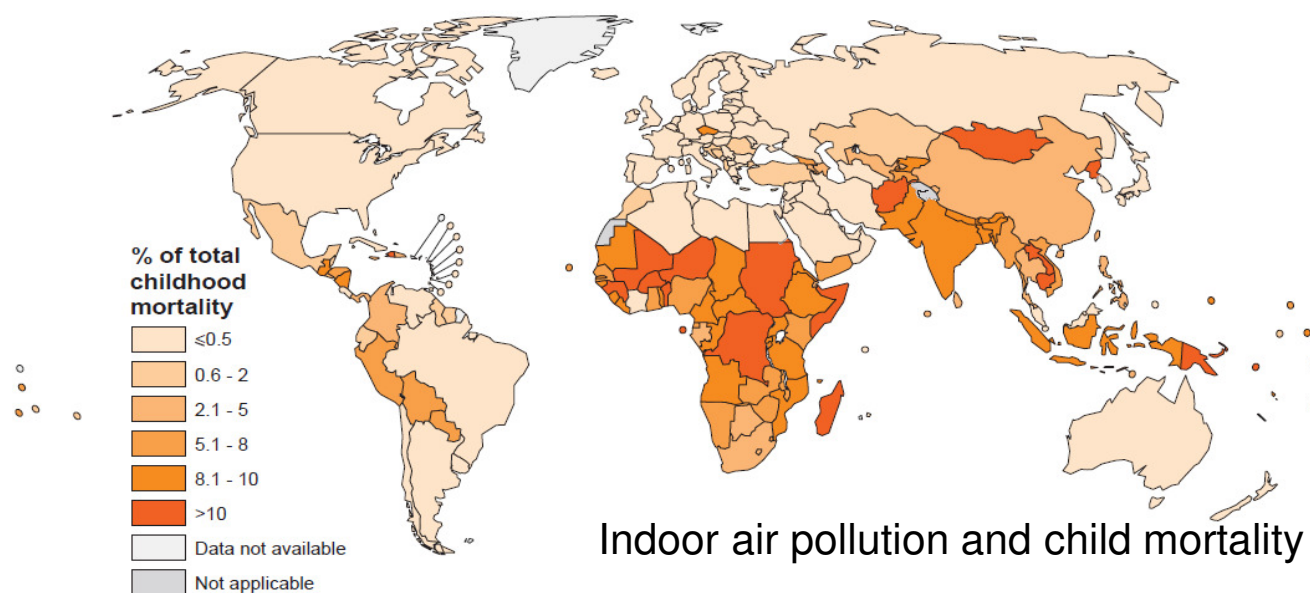
- "Health voice" in CEB, HLCP, UNFCCC.
- Technical partnerships: e.g. GFCS, Climate and Clean Air Alliance.



- Outreach and facilitation with health NGOs.
- Reducing WHO's carbon footprint.

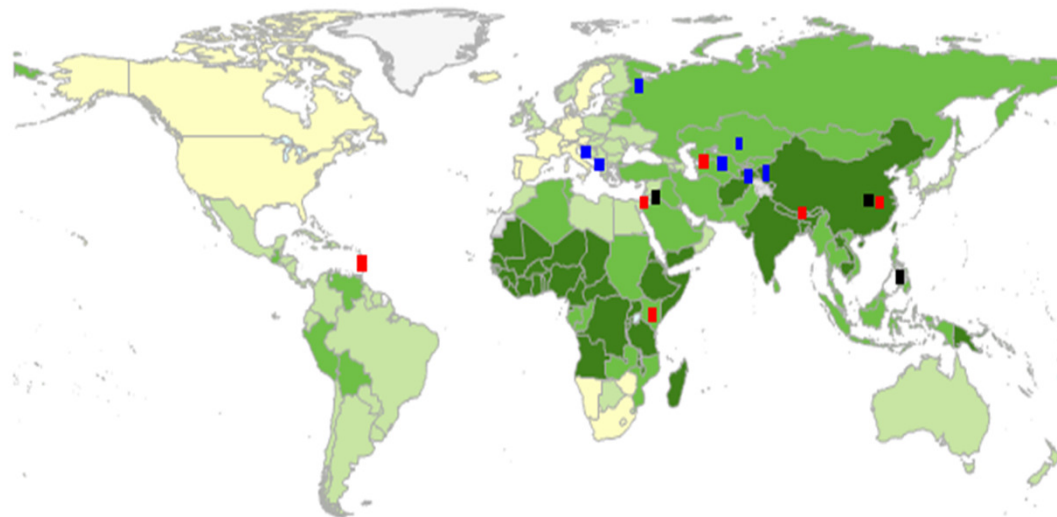
Science and Evidence

- Definition and support of climate and health research agenda, contribute to IPCC.
- Assessment of health risks from climate change, and health cobenefits of mitigation policies.
- Monitoring of health impacts of indoor air pollution, health vulnerability through water and sanitation, etc.



Health System Strengthening

- Regional frameworks for action on WHA resolution.
- Technical guidance, e.g. on vulnerability assessment, gender mainstreaming, adaptation planning.
- Vulnerability and adaptation assessments in > 30 countries
- 17 major projects on health adaptation to climate change, in 14 countries, in all WHO regions.



What next?